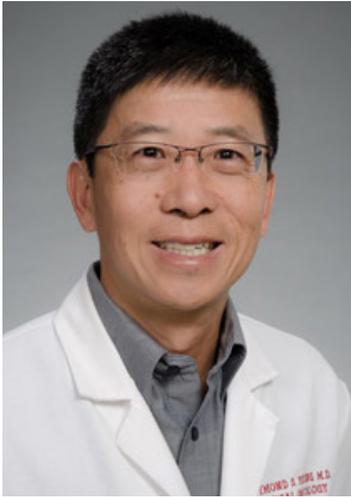


#GETTING TOKNOWDOS



Raymond S.W. Yeung MD, FRCS(C), FACS

Professor, Surgical Oncology
Section Chief, HPB Surgery
Founder, Liver Tumor Clinic
Director, Center for Advanced Minimally Invasive
Liver Oncologic Therapy (CAMILOT)

Deputy Director, Seattle Translational Tumor Liver Cancer Program

How did you pick your area of surgical expertise?

It just so happened surgical oncology was one of the earlier rotations during residency and made an impression on me. I found it interesting because you not only get to help people get rid of their cancer, but also really study how and why the cancer comes about.

How did you end up specializing in hepatopancreatobiliary (HPB) surgery?

When I started practice it was “general surgical oncology,” which is part of fellowship training. Over time, particularly in the last two decades, every field has become more subspecialized. Shortly after I arrived at UW, there was a clinical gap in HPB oncology, and I took a version of the multidisciplinary approach and applied it to liver tumors. We have a tumor board with specialists from eight disciplines reviewing each patient, and a consensus recommendation is taken back to the patient. To this day, I find the most enjoyment from listening to everyone’s opinions at the tumor boards. In the beginning (1998) the [Liver Tumor Clinic](#) saw about 1–2 patients a week, and now, 23 years later, we see up to 16 patients per week. This makes the UW Liver Tumor Clinic the longest running and highest volume multidisciplinary clinic in the Pacific Northwest.

Tell us about your most memorable patient/surgery.

[Anita Mitchell](#), a stage IV colorectal cancer patient who has beat the odds and is now over 15 years out. She was 41 when she was diagnosed and had widespread disease including liver metastases. Her presentation has become more and more prevalent. She survived and has become a fierce advocate for colorectal cancer patients, even starting her own charity, [Colon Stars](#). She and others who have beaten the odds.

Why did you choose to work for the Department of Surgery?

UW was actually the only place I applied besides where I did my fellowship, and I was thrilled to be hired not only because of its reputation, but also so that I could be closer to family. My sister lives in Vancouver, BC, and my parents are in Hong Kong.

What is the best career advice you’ve ever received?

One of my early mentors, a surgical oncologist, made an impression on me as he decided not to follow the beaten path and went on to develop a hyperthermia program for unresectable tumors. He and others reinforced the importance in following my passion and led me to play in the wonderful world of cancer research – learning the why and how cancer forms.

How has your practice/life changed since COVID?

Cancer didn’t slow down during the pandemic. The introduction of telehealth and zoom meetings enabled us to be more efficient at times, hence striking a better work-life balance.

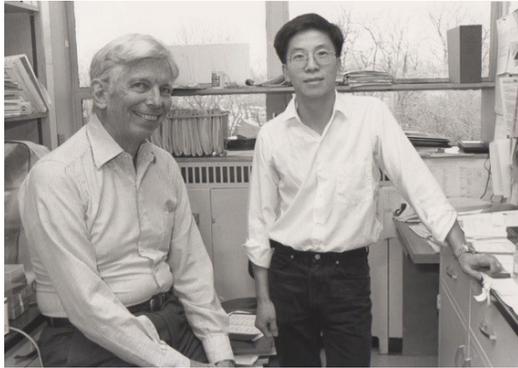
What are you known for (professionally or personally)?

Some may say my OR shoes (laughs). I’ve had the same pair of dress shoes since fellowship. I’ve tried wearing other types of shoes in the OR, including running shoes, but they’re not as comfortable so I stick with this pair. I clean them but they only stay in the OR. The soles and foot bed are still fine, but a lace broke the other day and I had to replace it with umbilical tape. I joke that when my shoes finally fall apart I will retire and have them bronzed.



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Al Knudson and Raymond Yeung

On the research side it would be related to the work I did in tuberous sclerosis complex (TSC). I spent two years post-fellowship in the lab investigating cancer genetics. I worked under Al Knudson on a model for tumor suppressor genes. Using positional cloning in a rat model of hereditary cancer, I identified TSC2 as one such suppressor gene. Within two decades after my discovery, the TSC research community was able to identify a drug compound that has been now been FDA approved for the treatment of TSC. I am lucky to have personally witnessed such a wonderful bench-to-bedside story in the world of molecular medicine.

What was your last impulse buy?

My dog, Koa. We had lost our previous dog of 14 years, Melia, and we thought we would not replace her, but that didn't last long (laughs). My wife saw Koa online and flew over to Eastern Washington to pick him up. He's 3 now and naughty as ever.



Where did you go on your most memorable vacation?

My best memories involve good people and great food. One that comes to mind is when my wife and I went to Vienna and ate at Steirereck im Stadtpark. In such a renaissance city you would not expect such a modern looking restaurant in the middle of a historic park. Their presentation and service were outstanding and one of the courses was honey served in the actual comb. We also got a tour of the kitchen and prep space.

Another trip that was very memorable was when I went to Shanghai, China as part of the Seattle Cancer Care Alliance's oncology outreach. We spoke at a CME event and then were able to enjoy a regional feast with colleagues, including this special dessert.



What is your personal motto?

What you eat defines who you are.
And I like to eat (laughs).



Dr. Yeung with his wife Cindy (center) and children (L-R) Amanda, Marcus, and Lindsay

rapid fire

What is the last book you read?

The End of Theory about the stock market crash and market psychology.

What TV show you're watching now?

Succession.

What is your go-to snack?

Chinese almond cookies.

What is your favorite guilty pleasure?

Music. Either listening late at night or tickling the ivories (playing the piano).

When are you the most productive?

Morning.

Who is your inspiration and why?

Al Knudson who told me never to write a chapter until you run out of ideas.

If a movie was made about your life, who would play you?

Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson because our body types are similar (laughs). Or Nick Young in Crazy Rich Asians.